

SHORT COMMUNICATION

THE IDENTITY OF *PROTEA MAGNIFICA* LINK

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(Compton Herbarium, Kirstenbosch)

ABSTRACT

Protea magnifica Link (1821) antedates the name *Protea barbiger* Meisn. (1856).

UITTREKSEL

DIE IDENTITEIT VAN *PROTEA MAGNIFICA* LINK

Protea magnifica Link (1821) 'n vroeëre naam vir *Protea barbiger* Meisn. (1856) word aangeteken.

INTRODUCTION

In 1821, Dr H. F. Link published a catalogue of the plants growing in the Royal Botanic Garden, Berlin. This list enumerates eleven species of *Protea*, of which only one, *Protea magnifica*, was described by Link as new. Apart from a brief diagnostic description, Link cites plate 438 in H. C. Andrews's *Botanist's Repository*, in his account of *P. magnifica*. Since no type material of *P. magnifica* has survived at Berlin (B), if indeed any was ever preserved in the first place, plate 438 in Andrews's *Botanist's Repository* must serve as the lectotype of the name. Significantly, Phillips and Stapf upheld *P. magnifica* Link in the *Flora Capensis*, but cited no collections under this name as they apparently were unable to associate any herbarium material with the plant depicted in Andrews's plate.

INTERPRETATION OF ANDREWS'S PLATE

Andrews's plate is a life size illustration of a flowering specimen from George Hibbert's collection. As is so often the case with Andrews's illustrations, it is rather stylized which is, perhaps, why Phillips and Stapf were unable to associate this plate and its accompanying description with any herbarium material. Here is another case where it is only too clear that had Phillips and Stapf been well acquainted with living material of *Protea* they would have been much better able to interpret some of the rather artless illustrations of Proteas prepared from plants grown under glasshouse conditions in Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries.

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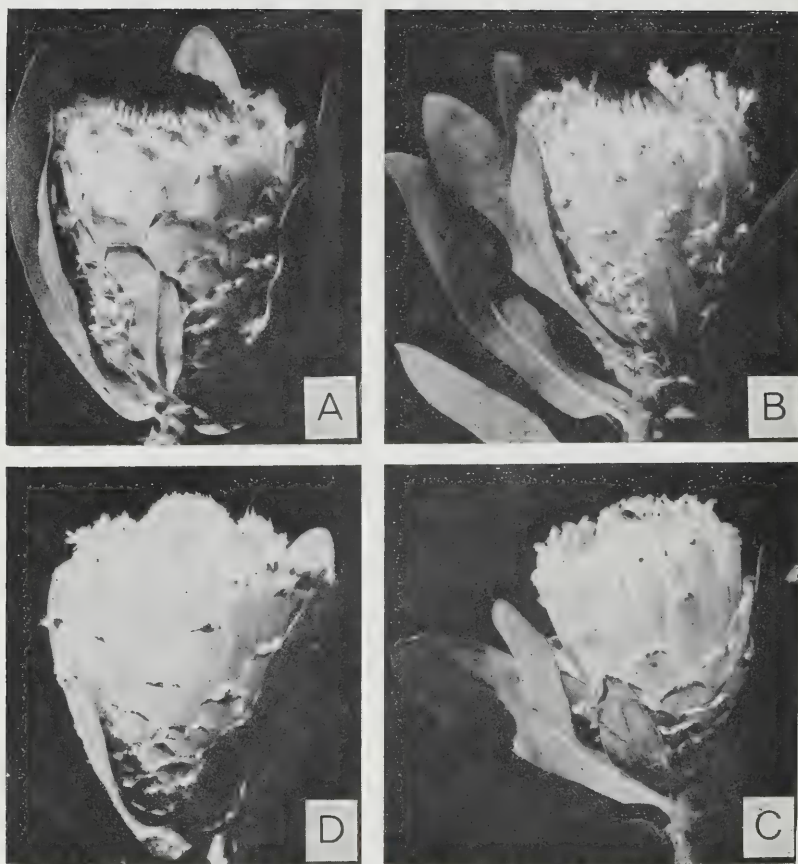


FIG. 1, A - D

Protea magnifica Link, showing the presence or absence of a dome of black pubescence in the centre of newly opened inflorescences, as well as variation in the size of the dome of black pubescence.

Specimens A - D are from a population sampling on Jonaskop, Riviersonderend mountains (Rourke 1492 (NBG)).

In fact, the species depicted in Andrews's plate 438 is conspecific with *Protea barbigera* Meisn. The specimen illustrated has a fully expanded inflorescence with the involucre bracts widely splayed as is typical in the post anthesis phase. It shows a form of this species having cream involucre bracts and no central dome of black pubescence. This form, lacking the central dome of black

pubescence, while unusual, is well within the normal range of variation in this species. As an example, a selection of specimens having creamy-green involucral bracts was collected from a population on Jonaskop in the Riviersonderend mountains (Fig. 1, A – D). At this locality, as at many others, there is considerable variation in the size and form of the central dome of black pubescence and in some plants the black dome is altogether absent (Fig. 1, D). This latter specimen matches Andrews's plate 438. Moreover, the dissected floral parts at the base of plate 438 show the characteristic white plumed awns on the adaxial perianth sheath and the abaxial perianth segment. Also, the form, dimensions, colour and pubescence of the leaves are quite distinctly diagnostic. In conclusion, it is worth quoting part of Andrews's description which accompanies plate 438:

"the upper scales of the empalement (*i.e. the involucre*) are lance-shaped, bearded, and of a yellowish white: the scales beneath are broadly ovate, downy, bearded, and discoloured towards the ends."

Such a description can only fit the cream-coloured form of the species hitherto known as *Protea barbiger*a Meisn. As *Protea magnifica* Link (1821) antedates *Protea barbiger*a Meisn. by 35 years, the familiar name *Protea barbiger*a must now go into synonymy and *Protea magnifica* must be upheld as the correct name for this species. Although the earliest available name, *Erodendrum magnificum* Salisb. ex Knight (1809) is based on the same iconotype as *Protea magnifica* Link (1821), Link did not transfer Knight's epithet *magnificum* to *Protea*.

SYNONYMY

Protea magnifica Link, Enum. Plant. Berol. (1): 113 (1821); Phill. & Stapf in Fl. Cap. 5:570 (1912). Type: Andr., Bot. Rep. t. 438 (Dec. 1806).

Erodendrum magnificum Salisb. ex Knight in Knight, Cult. Prot.: 37 (1809). Type: Andr., Bot. Rep. t. 438 (Dec. 1806).

*Protea barbiger*a Meisn. in DC., Prodr. 14: 233 (1856); Phill. & Stapf in Fl. Cap. 5:563 (1912); R. A. Dyer in Flower Pl. Afr. 28: t. 1086 (1950); Rousseau, Prot. of S.A. 19 – 24 (1970). Syntype: In rupestribus Witzenberg *Zeyher s.n.* in herb. Meisn. (NY!).